

REMARKS

Claims 7-14 were examined in the Office Action mailed July 13, 2005.

The Applicants have amended independent claim 7 to incorporate the limitations of its dependent claim 9, directed to the sloping of the air accumulation chamber's back wall (reference numeral 4 in the figures) relative to a horizontal plane. Conforming amendments canceling claims 9-10 and 13-14 have been made, without prejudice to the subject matter therein.

The Applicants have also amended claims 15-16 to eliminate multiple dependencies, with new claims 17-22 separating the previous multiple dependent claims into individual claims based on claims 15-16 (*i.e.*, claims 17-18 depend from claim 8, 19-20 from claim 11, and 21-22 from claim 12).

The following address the issues raised in the July 13, 2005 Office Action.

1. The Drawing and Specification Objections Have Been Addressed.

The Specification stands objected to for underlining of the section headers. The foregoing amendments delete the objected-to underlining.

As to the drawing objections:

- At page 4, the Specification identifies "outlet opening 12" as the opening of intake stub 9. At page 5, the third full paragraph has been amended to clarify that the openings 12 are the previously recited "outlet openings 12." As a related matter, the Applicants noted that some of the air intake openings 11 were mis-labeled in Fig. 1 as "12." The Applicants have enclosed a proposed drawing change to correct the label to read "11."
- As to the labels 11 and 13 designating "air intake openings," the Applicants respectfully submit that no drawing changes are needed, as the Specification unambiguously introduces each set of openings 11 and 13 as openings in different components, *i.e.*, openings 11 *of separating partition 4*, and openings 13 *of forward section piece 3*. See Specification, paragraph bridging pages 4-5.

- The first full paragraph on Specification page 5 has been amended to replace the reference to correct the bearing part reference label from 14 to "4," as shown in Fig. 1.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Applicants respectfully request the pending specification and drawing rejections be reconsidered and withdrawn.

2. The § 112 Rejection Has Been Addressed.

The Applicants have amended claim 15 to replace "convection" with "conveying." Reconsideration and withdrawal of the pending § 112, first paragraph rejection of claim 15 is respectfully requested.

3. The Claims Are Patentable Over The Cited References.

The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection as unpatentable under § 103(a) of claims 7-14 over U.S. Patent No. 6,471,558 B1 to Nakatsuji, *et al.* ("Nakatsuji"), claim 15 over Nakatsuji in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,251,712 to Hayashi, *et al.* ("Hayashi"), claim 16 over Nakatsuji and Hayashi, and in further view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002 0134598 A1 ("Nakamura"), on the grounds that Nakatsuji fails to teach or suggest all the features of the present invention recited in independent claim 7, and these deficiencies are not cured by Hayashi and/or Nakamura.

Claim 7 recites an air induction apparatus in which, *inter alia*, at least one air intake stub tube is located with an intake end in an air accumulation chamber located at a front end of the vehicle, wherein the front side of the air accumulation chamber is formed by a front end covering of the vehicle, and a

back side of the chamber is formed by a convex separating partition adjacent to an engine chamber of the vehicle. The convex separating partition includes “at least one accumulation chamber air inlet, located in a floor area of the partition.” Claim 7 further has been amended to include claim 9’s limitations: “a tangential plane of the convex separating partition is *transverse* to a longitudinal axis of the vehicle and is at an acute angle to a horizontal plane of the vehicle” and the at least one air intake opening in the floor area of the separating partition is below the intake end of the at least one stub tube.”

Nakatsuji discloses an air intake arrangement of a personal watercraft.

This reference is cited as teaching, *inter alia*:

- an air accumulation chamber at a front of the vehicle;
- a front side for the chamber formed by a front end covering;
- a back side covering formed by a convex separating partition adjacent to an engine chamber;
- a tangential plane of the convex separating partition being transverse to a longitudinal axis of the watercraft; and
- an intake opening below the inlet of the stub tube.

July 13, 2005 Office Action at 4-5.

In fact, review of Nakatsuji reveals that few of the limitations of claim 7 taught or suggested by this reference. Nakatsuji actually teaches:

- “air accumulation chambers” which are *not* “at a front of the vehicle” – as shown in the figures, “air box[es] 88, 90” (which are labeled “port” (left) and “starboard” (right), respectively), are located on the *sides* of the craft, well aft of the bow, near the operator controls (Figs. 1-7; 5:11-19);
- the “front” side of the chamber formed by *side* fairings, not a front end covering;

- the “back side covering” is not formed by a *convex* separating partition – as shown in Fig. 4, ducts 70 are mounted to plates which are *flat* under fairings 88, 90 (and even if the areas outside the fairings 88,90 are considered, the surface is a *concave* surface, not a convex one);
- the tangential plane of the duct mounting surfaces are *parallel* to the longitudinal axis of the watercraft (*see, e.g.*, Fig. 3) – not transverse to the longitudinal axis, as in the present Application; and
- intake openings located *in the outer fairings* 88, 90, not in the “back side covering” (*see, e.g.*, Fig. 6) as required by the present claims: “the at least one accumulation chamber air intake opening *in the floor area of the separating partition.*”

The Applicants respectfully submit that in view of all the features of the present invention recited in claim 7 which are not taught or suggested by Nakatsuji, this reference fails to render claim 7 and its dependent claims unpatentable under § 103(a). Further, because the Hayashi and Nakamura references further fail to teach or suggest the features not taught by Nakatsuji (Hayashi is cited for diverting air into a cooling module; Nakamura is cited for use of additional filters), no combination of these references teaches or suggests the invention recited in the pending claims.

The Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the pending § 103(a) rejections.

CONCLUSION

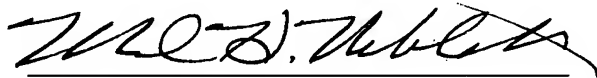
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Applicants submit that claims 7-8, 11-12 and 15-22 are in allowable form. Early and favorable consideration and issuance of a Notice of Allowance for these claims is respectfully requested.

If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #028987.52807US).

Respectfully submitted,

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Gary R. Edwards
Registration No. 31,824
Mark H. Neblett
Registration No. 42,028

CROWELL & MORING LLP
Intellectual Property Group
P.O. Box 14300
Washington, DC 20044-4300
Telephone No.: (202) 624-2500
Facsimile No.: (202) 628-8844

Amendments to the Drawings:

The Applicants have attached hereto for Examiner approval a REPLACEMENT SHEET containing a proposed change to Fig. 1 to correct the reference label "12" to "11." A red-ink markup of the proposed change is also attached hereto.



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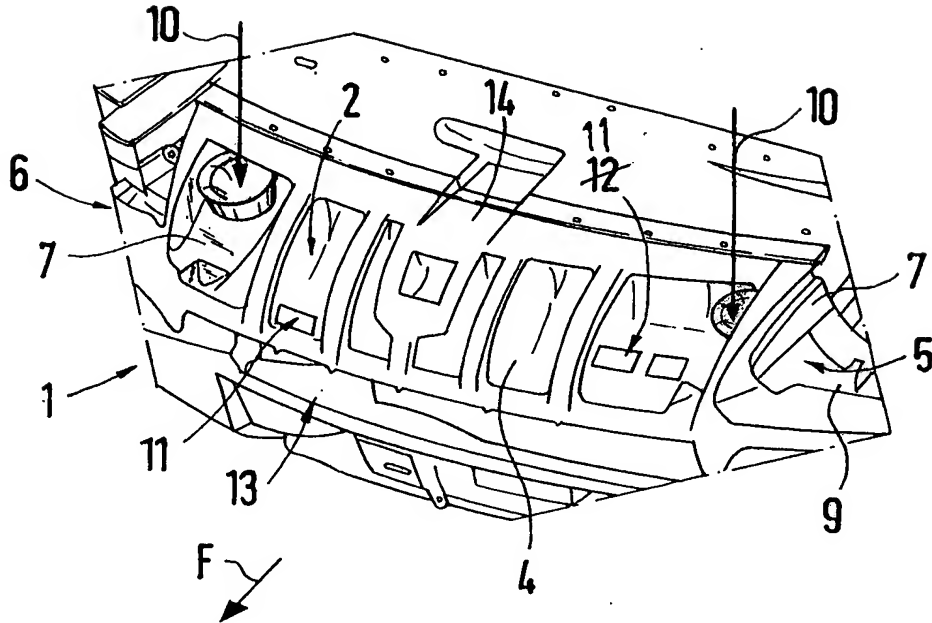


Fig.1

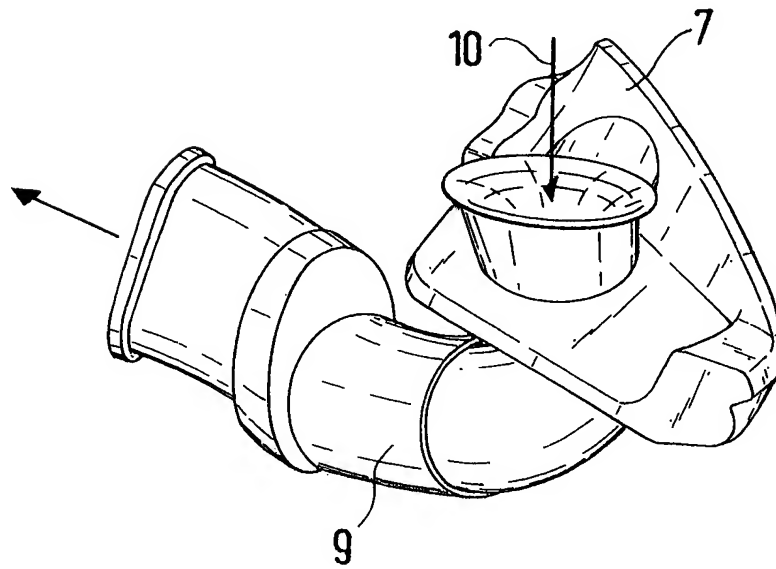


Fig.2